

we corresponded for a year or two
and then i fell hopelessly behind,
not being able to read
as fast as he could write.

HENRIETTA JAMES

speaking to my daughter
of some people we both know,
i say, "i can't really make a judgment
since i only have access to
one side of the story,"

and she says, "the only thing worse
than knowing one side of a story
is knowing both."

SHE SMELLS A RAT

she is angry because i am forty-five minutes late
and because i have been at the same type
of social gathering as the one at which
she and i first met.
she is so suspicious that,
even after my reassurances,
she is unresponsive in bed
and finally admits,
"you don't smell the same."

after this ridiculous admission, of course,
she is terribly embarrassed,
confesses paranoia,
resumes our lovemaking passionately.

i did, as a matter of fact,
walk one attractive woman to her car.
we did discuss some possibilities.
but we didn't do anything
that would have altered my aroma.

so my (as dr. johnson would have it) stink
must have been
entirely in her
imagination.